State of Idaho

DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 24, 2008

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Boise Woman Pleads Guilty to Insurance Fraud

BOISE ID – A Boise woman accused of insurance fraud pled guilty June 16 in federal court to Execution of a scheme to defraud a health care benefit program.

Shona Cortez, 45, submitted multiple falsified insurance claims on behalf of her husband, her son and herself to Aetna Insurance Company.

In February 2007, Idaho Department of Insurance Investigator Kevin Blue received information from Michael Fennessy of Aetna about the falsified claims and conducted an investigation. Investigator Blue discovered that Cortez filed claims with Aetna for which the insurance company paid \$28,208.48.

Insurance fraud is a felony punishable by up to ten years in jail and a \$250,000.00 fine.

Department Director Bill Deal said, "Insurance fraud is not a victimless crime. We have the obligation to protect the citizens of Idaho from individuals who commit fraudulent acts. We urge Idahoans to report suspected insurance fraud to our office for investigation."

Assistant US Attorney Wendy Olson prosecuted the case for the Department of Insurance. Sentencing is scheduled for September 2008 before Federal Judge Edward Lodge.